

VZCZCXYZ0002  
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHTV #1792/01 2271015  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 141015Z AUG 08  
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7992  
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEAHQA/HQ USAF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEADWD/DA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHMFIUU/CNO WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEHAD/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY 4266  
RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY 0873  
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY 4602  
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 5055  
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY 4258  
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY 2599  
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY 5018  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 1882  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 0094  
RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY 8869  
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY 6349  
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH PRIORITY 1266  
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY 5371  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 7331  
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 0271  
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY  
RHMFIUU/COMSIXTHFLT PRIORITY

UNCLAS TEL AVIV 001792

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM  
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA  
HQ USAF FOR XXXX  
DA WASHDC FOR SASA  
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA  
CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR  
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD  
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO ICD  
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL  
PARIS ALSO FOR POL  
ROME FOR MFO

SIPDIS  
E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

-----  
SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:  
-----

- [1](#)1. Iran
- [1](#)2. Mideast

-----  
Key stories in the media:  
-----

All media reported that yesterday Defense Minister Ehud Barak unleashed a fierce attacks against FM Tzipi Livni. He was quoted as saying: "The Foreign Minister, with her background as it is, is not built to make decisions, not at three in the morning and not at

three in the afternoon. Being in the room when decisions are made does not make you fit and ready to make them." Barak also criticized Livni's statements about UNSC Resolution 1701 being her top decision. He called Kadima a "refugee camp." Israel Radio and other media reported that last night Transportation Minister Shaul Mofaz and Livni presented a show of unity in response to Barak's comments. All media reported that yesterday Tzachi Hanegbi, Chairman of the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, and head of Kadima's steering committee, endorsed Livni for the party chairmanship.

Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili was quoted as saying in an interview with Ha'aretz that Israeli military aid is still flowing into his country. In an interview with Maariv, Saakashvili was quoted as saying that Israelis had a small part in Georgia's big effort. However, Ha'aretz reported that Georgian Reintegration Minister Temur Yakobashvili told the newspaper that Israel has joined in the West's betrayal of Georgia, terming the GOI's decision to stop arms exports to his country a "disgrace." Some 100 Georgian Jews have started the immigration process to Israel since the fighting began.

Last night Channel 2-TV reported that yesterday Israel's Ambassador in Washington, Sallai Meridor, sent a scathing letter to Defense Minister and Labor Party leader Ehud Barak, accusing him of harming Israel's diplomatic mission in the U.S. during his most recent visit two weeks ago. The letter claimed that Barak refused to include Foreign Ministry officials in meetings with senior U.S. officials that dealt with "sensitive and important" issues. Meridor said that Barak's decision limited the leverage of Israeli diplomats permanently placed in Washington because it made them seem detached from the leadership in Israel.

Ha'aretz quoted Defense Minister Barak as saying yesterday that the cease-fire deal with Hamas along the Gaza border has created conditions that facilitate the talks to free Gilad Shalit. Barak was also quoted as saying that sanctions against Iran must be toughened. The Jerusalem Post quoted Barak as saying that the U.S. has clearly stated that it opposes military action against Iran now. The Jerusalem Post reported that the U.S. Department of Defense told the newspaper yesterday that reports that a large American, British, and French naval force is en route to the Persian Gulf to blockade Iran are untrue.

Ha'aretz reported that PM Ehud Olmert has proposed to PA President Mahmoud Abbas that the "shelf agreement" the two sides are working on include an agreement for Israel to take in Palestinian refugees as part of "family unification." Ha'aretz quoted sources in Israel and the U.S. as saying that Olmert proposed to Abbas that Israel absorb some 2,000 Palestinian refugees a year for 10 years, on a humanitarian basis and according to a formula to be determined in advance.

Leading media reported that the IDF has closed an investigation into the death of a Reuters cameraman in Gaza on Aug 16. The Jerusalem Post quoted Reuters as saying that it is "deeply disturbed" by the findings and that the army's conclusion could encourage further violence against journalists operating in war zones.

The Jerusalem Post reported that yesterday the Knesset's Economic Affairs Committee called on the PM to speed up the final approval process for 500 new apartment units in the ultra-Orthodox city of Beitar Illit, which is located less than a kilometer over the Green Line.

Leading media reported that yesterday a 16-year-old Palestinian was arrested at a roadblock south of Nablus after he was found hiding two pipe bombs and a pocket knife. The media also reported on cases of violence in the territories.

The Jerusalem Post quoted Brenda Shaffer, a lecturer on Central Asia and the Caucasus region at the University of Haifa, as saying that it was likely that Russia would go along with sanctions against Iran now, but that if the West takes a hard line on the Georgia issue, then Moscow would likely respond by taking a tough line of its own on other issues, including being less cooperative with the West on

Iran,

Leading media reported that Jordanian border officials refused to allow a group of Israeli tourists carrying Jewish religious objects such as prayer shawls and phylacteries to enter their country on Tuesday, saying it was a "safety measure" to avoid potential terror threats.

The Jerusalem Post quoted a Foreign Ministry official as saying yesterday that the government plans to transfer ownership of the land on which the city's St. Sergius Church stands to Russia in the coming weeks.

Last night Channel 10-TV reported that PM Olmert demanded \$5,000 after speaking at a fundraising event for an organization that runs the Sarel IDF volunteer program. Eventually, the organization compromised on \$2,000.

Some media quoted Muhammad Bassiouny, who was Egyptian ambassador to Israel for 21 years, as saying last Saturday at the Alexandria Library that he had been an emissary of Egyptian intelligence.

-----  
11. Iran:  
-----

Summary:  
-----

The independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized: "Israel's military option has not evaporated.... At the same time, Israel must allow diplomatic efforts to move ahead, lower the tone of the military threat, and understand that the dialogue with Iran is essential to an attempt to reduce its military motivation."

Block Quotes:  
-----

"Diplomacy instead of Belligerence"

The independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized (8/14): "The warning conveyed by Washington to Israel not to attack Iran, and its demand of Jerusalem not to surprise it with such an attack, should not startle us. The Bush administration, which during its two terms in office used the threat of war as a main strategy for curbing Iran's nuclear capabilities, has recently adopted a new policy that does not correspond with Israel's belligerent declarations.... Israel ... is liable to find itself in an inferior position in the face of European countries' diplomatic ambitions, the economic interests of China and Russia, and the American pressure for quiet in Iraq. This requires Israel to maneuver wisely and cautiously so as not to render itself an isolated warmonger, and from there a regional threat. This is especially the case when it is clear that the region, Iran, and the great powers all understand that Israel's military option has not evaporated and that faced with an existential, genuine, and immediate threat, Israel will not take foreign interests into consideration. At the same time, Israel must allow diplomatic efforts to move ahead, lower the tone of the military threat, and understand that the dialogue with Iran is essential to an attempt to reduce its military motivation."

-----  
12. Mideast:  
-----

Summary:  
-----

Veteran columnist Evelyn Gordon wrote in the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post: "Rebuilding deterrence must be a top

priority. And Kadima cannot be trusted with the job. Its record speaks for itself."

Block Quotes:

-----

"How Israel Became the Boy who Cried Wolf"

Veteran columnist Evelyn Gordon wrote in the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post (8/14): "[One of Israel's more flawed recent policies was] its nonstop threats that we would 'soon' lose patience and invade Gaza. Since that never happened, Israel became the boy who cried wolf. It has lost any ability to make credible threats, as its enemies will consider them mere hot air. Then, in June, the government capitulated completely, accepting a truce on Hamas's terms -- which [Shin Bet head Yuval] Diskin termed a 'lifesaver' for the organization.... In short, rather than showing that peace pays better than terror, Kadima showed that terror pays better than peace -- thereby encouraging it.... The picture in the North is identical..... Since the [Second Lebanon] War, Hizbullah has tripled its rocket supply, to about 40,000, and now has virtually all of Israel in range rather than the North alone. And again we did nothing. Moreover, Hizbullah's rearmament enabled it to seize control of Lebanon's government this spring, further increasing its ability to threaten Israel. But not content with mere inaction, Kadima actively undermined its chances of mustering effective diplomatic pressure against the smuggling via its indirect negotiations with Syrian President Bashar Assad. For Assad, the benefits were immediate: After years of international isolation, he was welcomed back to the world stage.... Kadima inherited a country with a weakened but still extant deterrent posture and proceeded to systemically destroy it. Now, rebuilding deterrence must be a top priority. And Kadima cannot be trusted with the job. Its record speaks for itself."

MORENO